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Dan Tsantilis | Submitted photo

CREATURE REPORT: Daniel Hersh, center, plays the role of Captain Barnacles in "The Octonauts and the Deep Sea Volcano Adventure."

Calling all Octonauts

Live version of popular TV show coming to Indianapolis

**By Rob Burgess
Kokomo Tribune**

INDIANAPOLIS - Parents and children who are fans of the British animated television series "The Octonauts" should prepare to activate the Creature Report. The first-ever interactive theater show version to tour the U.S. is visiting more than 60 cities including Indianapolis, where it is set to begin at 5 p.m. Oct. 29 at the Murat Theatre at the Old National Centre, 502 N. New Jersey St.

"The Octonauts and the Deep Sea Volcano Adventure" invites audiences on an exciting underwater quest through a world full of adventure and surprises, according to a press release. The show features brand new and fan favorite songs led by the entire eight-member crew — including Captain Barnacles, Lieutenant Kwazii and Medic Peso. The high-tech production features costume characters, animated projections on a huge screen and a brand new storyline and script.

Daniel Hersh, who plays the role of Captain Barnacles, is a southern California native who graduated from American Musical and Dramatic Academy with a BFA in musical theatre.

"I knew they needed shorter actors for the project, and they needed people who could sing, and people who had puppeteering experience," he said in a phone interview last week.

Hersh said growing up his favorite cartoon was "Rugrats." He said even though he hadn't heard of "The Octonauts" before auditioning for the role, he quickly found the value.

"It's very educational, especially about marine life," he said.

Hersh said his previous experience playing Daffy Duck at Six Flags Magic Mountain served him well as the show is a physical experience for performers, with multiple full-body costumes.

"You don't have any peripheral vision," he said. "So, it just took some getting used to. ... We have microphones inside our [costume] heads. ... You get winded a little bit more than you normally would. We've obviously built up our tolerance."

Hersch said he wanted to make sure parents knew they could have as much fun as their children.

"The kids love it. We include them in the show," he said. "In one of our shows there was a bit of space in between the stage and the first row of seats, and at the very end where they have a dance party there was a little kid mosh pit. ... [The show] is very visually stunning. The story has a lot of substance. It's not like some other kids shows where it's all fluff and funny stuff. There's a real story happening, and it's a lot of fun."

“The Octonauts” live show consists of two acts each running about 30 minutes, plus a brief intermission. For more information, visit www.octonautsliveus.com or www.facebook.com/octonautslive. You can also search on social media using #octonautslive.

The tour comes on the heels of new “Octonauts” episodes premiering throughout the year on Disney Channel and Disney Junior. Seasons one, two and three are also available on Netflix, and the first ever “Octonauts” 4D movie adventure is coming later this year.

Tickets are on sale now at OldNationalCentre.com, Ticketmaster.com, all Ticketmaster outlets, or by phone at 800-745-3000. VIP packages are available through CID entertainment and include a meet and greet with the characters and premium seating. For more information, visit www.octonautsliveus.com.

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